

# *Mental Wellbeing Guide:* **Motivation**



Discover ways to stay motivated, manage stress and anxiety during your university journey.

---

Sometimes people struggle to meet their expectations, like adopting healthier habits or exercising more. This is normal and doesn't indicate failure.

## Identify Motivational Types

Motivation comes in two types: intrinsic and extrinsic.

- **Intrinsic motivation** means doing something because it *makes you happy inside*. For example, you might read a book because you enjoy it, not for any reward.
- **Extrinsic motivation** is about doing something for an *external reward*. For instance, you might study to get a good grade on a test because you want a high score.

While intrinsic motivation may help you pursue long-term goals, extrinsic motivation can be used to hasten the process of achieving small tasks. For example, if you're a procrastinator, you can reward yourself with small treats (e.g., a piece of chocolate) after finishing cleaning your apartment.



## Difficulty Is Expected, But...!

Still, it's not as simple as just doing the things that will bring us what we want. Common barriers include fear and avoidance, often coming from negative past experiences that discourage us from certain actions.

In these situations, we often have to address the negative feelings or beliefs associated with these tasks. But, in time, you can change how your mind and body respond by learning to feel good about working through challenges and not avoiding them.

# TIPS

- **Set specific, achievable goals:**
  - Clear and realistic goals provide a target and motivate progress. They should challenge you enough to maintain interest without being overwhelming.
  - Ideally, we want to evaluate our goals based on reasonably high standards that are reachable. This achievement is linked to boosting realistic self-esteem and self-confidence (i.e., the feeling of “I’m good enough”) which, in turn, increases motivation.
- **Practice self-compassion:**
  - Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, especially during setbacks. This approach helps reduce self-criticism, which can sap motivation and increase feelings of inadequacy.
  - Having reliable self-esteem also helps with this process. In other words, when facing setbacks, criticisms, or flatters, you can flexibly respond to those evaluations with openness and humility.
- In time, you can change how your mind and body respond to taking on tasks by learning to feel good about working through challenges and not avoiding them.

# Summary

It is common to feel unmotivated and discouraged when starting a new activity or routine. However, knowing the psychology of motivation can help you become 'freer' to choose.

## **Types of Motivation:**

- Intrinsic: Doing something because it makes you happy (e.g., reading for pleasure).
- Extrinsic: Doing something for an external reward (e.g., studying for a good grade).

## **Motivation Applications:**

- Intrinsic motivation supports long-term goals.
- Extrinsic motivation helps achieve small tasks faster (e.g., rewarding yourself for cleaning).

## **Overcoming Barriers:**

- Common barriers: Fear and avoidance from past negative experiences.
- Address negative feelings to change how you respond to challenges.

## **Goal Setting:**

- Set specific, achievable goals to stay motivated.
- Achieving these goals boosts self-esteem and confidence.

## **Self-Compassion:**

- Treat yourself kindly during setbacks to reduce self-criticism.
- Reliable self-esteem helps respond to setbacks with openness.

# Additional resources



[UNB Wellness Hub](#)